

7/10/2009 Moran Meets with Secretary Sebelius to Discuss Kansas Health Care Priorities

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Fights for Larned Hospital, Other Kansas Medical Facilities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Jerry Moran today met with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in Washington, D.C., to discuss health care reform and critical health care issues affecting Kansans.

“We stand at an important juncture in our health care system,” Moran said. “The Obama Administration and Democratic congressional leaders have vowed to pass a comprehensive health care reform bill before the August congressional recess - which is just a few weeks away. I am troubled by the rapid pace that reform legislation is being drafted. Therefore, I requested this meeting with Secretary Sebelius to see that Kansas priorities are identified and sufficiently addressed.”

During the meeting, Moran and the Secretary discussed a wide range of Kansas health care issues, including:

The proposed closure of St. Joseph Memorial Hospital in Larned:

- Central Kansas Medical Center (CKMC) and its parent affiliate, Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI), recently announced

plans to close the hospital effective September 30, 2009, and appear unwilling to transfer the facility's "Critical Access Hospital (CAH)" license, which is required to operate a financially viable hospital in Larned, to a new entity.

The possible loss of CAH designation for hospitals in Wamego and Onaga:

- An unintended consequence of a proposed Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) rule changing the geographic classification of the counties of Riley, Geary, and Pottawatomie from rural to urban would force two hospitals in Pottawatomie County to lose their CAH designation, threatening their financial well-being.

Kansas' possible participation in the Rural Community Hospital Demonstration Program:

- Congress created this program to help small rural hospitals through enhanced reimbursements and other assistance. The ten most sparsely populated states in the U.S. were originally authorized for participation in the program. Kansas ranks 11th in population density but several hospitals in the state appear to meet all the necessary criteria to be considered for participation in the program.

"As the former governor of our state, Secretary Sebelius has insight into the unique health care issues that Kansans face," Moran continued. "It does not do someone any good to have an insurance card when there is no medical professional to administer care. Access to care is the critical issue facing many areas and we will need every advocate possible to support the needs of Kansans in this health care reform debate."

Moran is Co-Chairman of the House Rural Health Care Coalition and co-founder of the Congressional Community Pharmacy Coalition.

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